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REPRESENTATIVE PHOTO

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MINISTRY REMOVES SALARY CAP ON INDIAN COACHES

Sports minister Kiren Rijiju says elite Indian coaches will be eligible for over ₹2 lakh a month and four-year contracts

ATTRACTING FORMER ELITE ATHLETES

The ministry said future hirings will be like that of foreign coaches, for a four-year cycle in sync with Olympics. This move, according to ministry, has been taken "to attract ex-elite athletes into the high performance sporting ecosystem, and to use their experience and skill to train athletes bound for major international competitions, including the Olympics" | P13

TARGET CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE

- All new coaches and existing coaches who are given the new contracts will be imparting training at national camps and SAI's National Center of Excellence (NCOEs)
- The selection will be made jointly by the sports ministry and respective National Sports Federations

20
NUMBER OF NCOES IN INDIA TO BENEFIT FROM THIS

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TRICHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • WARANGAL • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

EXPRESS READ

I-T dept pushes for equalisation levy

New Delhi: The I-T dept on Saturday notified changes to tax challans to make foreign e-commerce transactions liable for 2% equalisation levy. The first instalment of the tax is to be paid on July 7 | P12

'Most firms report revenue loss in Q4'

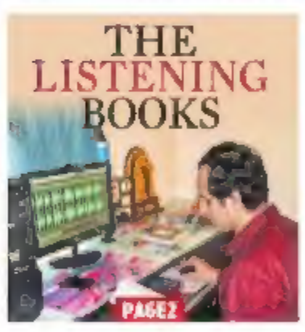
New Delhi: Companies across sectors suffered a 5% revenue dip and a 30% drop in operating profits in the 4th quarter of FY20, says a new SBI Ecowrap report | P12

3 Indian firms keen on monorail project

Mumbai: BHEL, BEML and Titagarh have shown interest in manufacturing rakes for the monorail project, weeks after MMRDA scrapped the bids by two Chinese firms | P12

Kolkata bans flights from 6 cities

Kolkata: No passenger flights will operate to Kolkata from Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Pune, Nagpur and Ahmedabad between July 6 and July 19, the Kolkata airport said on Saturday | P10



A convoy of Indian Army trucks moves towards the LAC in eastern Ladakh, in the backdrop of the stand-off with Chinese troops, in Leh on Saturday | PTI

China's many border disputes prove PM's point, say experts

PUSHKAR BANAKAR @ New Delhi

CHINA on Friday refuted Prime Minister Narendra Modi's remarks of expansionism but Beijing has an ongoing border/maritime dispute with 18 countries primarily because of its claims on the other country's territory or waters.

In the South China Sea, it has disputes with countries such as Vietnam, Taiwan, Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines. Despite a 2016 arbitration ruling against it, Beijing continues to push its claims for jurisdiction over the resource-rich region.

China is also involved in a tussle with Japan over the ownership of the Senkaku Islands, known as Diaoyudao Islands in China. While the administration of the waters has been with the Japanese, China lays claim to the islands. As recently as Thursday, the Japanese had lodged a protest when two Chinese vessels entered their territory.

China also lays claims to Mongolia, citing historical precedents. Beijing does not recognise its northern neighbour. With India, apart from the Ladakh sector where it has a border dispute, China also does not recognise Arunachal Pradesh to be part of India's territory. Its maps include India's northeastern state.

"Yes, of course China is pursuing expansionism. But China is so hypersensitive about its perceived sovereignty that it forgets that it has another role to play as a modern nation," said Debashis Chaudhari of the Institute of Chinese Studies.

B R Deepak, Sinologist and chairperson of the Centre for Chinese and South Asian Studies at JNU, echoed his views saying China was quick to accuse others of imperialist expansionism but never accepted its own imperial expansionism.

"Modi has struck the right chords when he talked about expansionism, no wonder China knew who the target was and came up with their explanations. China has laid huge territorial claims in the South China Sea where its claims are being fiercely contested by Vietnam, the Philippines, Indonesia, etc," he said. P9

ICMR defends vaccine push, says process in line with global norms

Says order to speed up clinical trial meant to cut red tape, but silent on August 15 launch

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi

A day after the Indian Council of Medical Research was widely criticised for setting a deadline of sorts to develop an indigenous vaccine for Covid-19, the country's apex health research body said on Saturday that its order to 12 hospitals to expedite clinical trials was in accordance with "globally accepted norms to fast-track the vaccine development."

In a statement, the ICMR said its letter "to investigators of the clinical trial sites was meant to cut unnecessary red tape, without bypassing any necessary process, and speed up recruitment of participants." It was, however, silent on the date of the launch of the vaccine, which had been fixed for August 15.

ICMR director general Balram Bhargava's July 2 letter directed the hospitals to get immediate approval by their internal research ethics committee and enroll subjects and complete the trial at the earliest as the government was looking to launch the vaccine for public use by August 15.

It warned that "non-compliance will be viewed very seriously."

Saturday's statement sought to defend the July 2 letter saying "after intense characterisation and review of all data from BBIL, (the) ICMR is supporting the clinical development as the vaccine candidate appears to be promising."

The clarification said the "ICMR is committed to treat the safety and interests of people of India as a topmost priority." Based on in-depth scrutiny of the available data from pre-clinical studies, the Drugs Controller General of India has accorded permission to conduct phase 1 and 2 clinical trial, the statement said, adding that in the larger public health interest, it was important for the ICMR to expedite the clinical trials with "a promising indigenous vaccine."

India's nodal agency for Covid 19 management also said that just as red tape was not allowed to become a hindrance in the fast track approval of new indigenous testing kits or for introducing in the Indian market potential Covid-19 related drugs, the indigenous vaccine development process has also been sought to be insulated from slow file movement.

The aim was to complete these phases at the earliest so that population-based trials for its efficacy could be initiated without delay, the ICMR said, adding that the trials would be done following the best practices and rigour and would be reviewed, as required, by a Data Safety Monitoring Board.

Trust our researchers, says ICMR

The ICMR said, while criticism is welcome, one should not second guess the best of India's medical professionals and research scientists for their professionalism or adherence to the highest scientific rigour.

'Can't expect a vaccine this year'

A vaccine cannot be expected before early next year, as its development is a complex process, said Rakesh Mishra, Director of Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology.

1,839
Saturday saw the highest number of new positive cases till date

REPORTS PAGE 5

KARNATAKA COVID-19 BATTLE

9,244 Recoveries so far
335 Deaths so far
21,549 Cases till Saturday

- Bengaluru Urban once again topped in the number of positive cases on a single day with 1,372. It also registered the highest of 24 of 42 deaths in state
- Police stations, hospitals and many residential areas sealed down in Mysuru
- Random testing to be carried out in Vijayapura. Routine testing of symptomatic patients to continue
- 6 people who died recently in Bidar test +ve

CM adds heft to Covid fight, drafts two more ministers

ASHWINI M SRIPAD @ Bengaluru

AS the number of Covid-19 positive cases continues to surge in Bengaluru, Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa on Saturday roped in two of his key ministers into the team that is fighting the pandemic. With this move, the CM will be looking at augmenting resources, specially in Bengaluru, while placating ruffled feathers.

The CM has delegated the responsibility of overseeing Covid care centres (CCC) to Deputy CM Dr C N Ashwanthnarayan while Revenue Minister R Ashok, along with the CM's political secretary Vishwanath, will coordinate with private hospitals as regard availability of beds. Medical Education Minister Dr K Sudhakar will continue to focus on the Coronavirus policy and has also been entrusted with the task of briefing the media daily.

Ashok and Ashwanthnarayana, both MLAs from Bengaluru, were said to be miffed over not being taken into confidence while Dr Sudhakar was given overall charge of Covid-19-related issues in Bengaluru. Opposition leaders too had accused the ministers of not having proper coordination.

Recently, when Sudhakar's family members tested positive for Covid-19, he was under home quarantine and during that time, Ashok was given charge of the state capital. This apparently left Health Minister B Sriramulu and Dr Ashwathnarayana disappointed.

Sources said that at a time when the number of cases in the city is increasing, the CM was keen to ensure that all his ministers work as a cohesive team, without any differences. "A number of IAS and IPS officers are working on measures to fight the pandemic. It is a smart move by the CM to delegate responsibility to three ministers and involve all of them," the sources added. P5

Centralised system for allocation of beds in B'luru

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

THE State Government on Saturday constituted a real-time bed allocation team under the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) for easy availability to Covid-19 patients in Bengaluru, which has seen a huge spike in the number of cases.

The team will also address grievances of patients and families over non-availability of beds.

The new centralised system, headed by Tushar Girinath, Principal Secretary, Co-operation Department, will have real-time bed allocation and availability software with a hotline to 108 ambulance service and 1912 grievance redressal service in case patients are deprived of beds.

As per the circular issued on Saturday, the BBMP team will get the list of Covid -positive patients from the ICMR portal on a real-time basis and will call the patient to ascertain his/her correct address and location. P7

INTERVIEW

'We lost 26 lakh man-hours in the last two months'

RAMU PATIL @ Bengaluru

MANY ongoing defence projects at the state-owned Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) are likely to be hit due to the Covid-19-induced disruption in the supply chain in India and abroad.

HAL Chairman and MD R Madhavan told *TNSE* that getting materials from subcontractors, mostly MSMEs,

and some big firms is crucial for their projects. "We lost 26 lakh man-hours in the last two months. Currently, it is recoverable as long as material starts coming. But our main problem is with the supply chain," Madhavan said while hoping for an improvement in the situation. The ongoing projects like Light Combat Aircraft Tejas, Su-30MKI repair and overhaul, Intermediate Jet Trainer that is designed and developed by the PSU, and Advanced Light Helicopter, are likely to take a hit.

FULL INTERVIEW: P9

COVID SCARE

Techies from North Karnataka logging out of IT City

MAHESH M GOUDAR
@ Bagalkot/Vijayapura

SILICON City no longer appeals to techies and others from North Karnataka. Most of them, who had migrated for better livelihood and had settled in the capital city, are rushing to their hometowns.

The reason is not far to seek. An alarming spike in Covid-19 cases in Bengaluru, a dubious distinction of 1,172 on Saturday alone, is making these panic-stricken people head back home.

Most of the buses operating to the districts of North Karnataka from Bengaluru have been running full for the past few days.

Siddramappa Navalgund, a software engineer and a resident of Kamalanagar in Bengaluru, said, "Every day, the Covid-19 cases in Bengaluru are seeing a drastic rise. This has created panic everywhere. We have decided to lock our home and leave for Gadag, our hometown, for about a month or till the situation returns to normal."

He has been living in Bengaluru for the past two decades. He said, "Since cases in Bengaluru are rising rapidly, the tech firm where I work has given permission to work from home for the next two months. And my father, who works in a private company, has tendered his resignation due to the Covid fear. We feel safer in our hometown than Bengaluru."

A migrant worker's family returns to their hometown with their belongings on Saturday, apprehensive about the increasing number of Covid cases in Bengaluru | SHIVAKUMAR H

Anil Myageri, a resident of Lokapur of Bagalkot, said 12 people, including him, from the surrounding villages, work in automobile companies located in and around Kengeri and Bidadi. "We are all friends. Our parents started panicking when they heard of the Covid surge in Bengluru. After taking the permission of our respective managers, we all returned to our hometown on Friday," said Anil.

Speaking to *The New Sunday Express*, Govinda Reddy, Chief Executive Officer of Vijayapura Zilla Panchayat, said, "It has come to our notice that after the rise in Covid-19 cases in Bengaluru, people in large numbers are returning to their hometowns. We cannot insist on home quarantine as they are intra-state travellers." P5

SAFETY FIRST

Secretariat staff from sealed zones can work from home

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

THE Karnataka Government has permitted its employees who are working out of the Secretariat offices, including the Vidhana Soudha, to work from home if they are residing in containment zones.

A circular issued by Department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms says that in view of the increasing number of Covid-19 cases, there is a need to take precautionary measures.

Hence, employees working in Vidhana Soudha, Vikasa Soudha, MS Building and other Secretariat offices, who are residing in containment zones, can work from home.

Only last week, the Vidhana Soudha and the Vikasa Soudha were shut for two days for sanitisation after some staffers tested positive for Covid-19.